

*The Poor Man's Petition to the Lords and Gentlemen
of the Kingdom: Or, Englands Cry for Peace.*

Mijn Heer Halewyn, desirous of Peace and Commerce, for the Security as well as the Ease and Advantage of his Country-men, and being transported with Zeal to make his Innocence appear, said, perhaps with a little too much Warmth and Freedom at his Tryal, *That being before the High Court of Justice of his Country, he had a mind to convince them that it was none of his Fault, if Lives and Estates were sacrific'd to Men; and that he had rather dye than that should be any longer continued, and play on Dobbs, Dobbs, Dob, and Fanfare for the King of England.* Halewyn's Sentence, p. 13. However agreeable this Speech, or the Negotiation of the *Halewyn's*, may be to the Citizens of a Republick, I am sure it will not become the Subject of a Monarchy. For, in the Empire of Great Britain, 'tis the undoubted Prerogative of the King to make War or Peace at his Pleasure; the Military no less than the Civil Sword is his; and I must needs own, That he is no good Denizon of *England* that will not acquiesce in the Resolutions of his Prince, whether it be for the Continuance or Cessation of his Arms. But, my Lords and Gentlemen, this evidently shews, That there are a Party among the *Dutch*, whose Designs and Inclinations are for ending the War; and because it would be very Fatal to *England*, if they should do it separately, there ought to be great Care taken, that they do not prevent us in an Accommodation. And however *Mijn Heer Halewyn's* Conduct may be liable to Censure, yet his Intentions were honourable; and his Desires of Peace arose from no other Motive than the Interest and Advantage of his bleeding Country: And so far, we are sure, it can neither be a Crime, nor any Indecency in us to imitate him. Since therefore fresh Proposals are made by the *French*, (and very honourable and advantageous, as we are inform'd, to the Confederacy, in which *England* bears the greatest Share of the Burthen, and should have the fairest Lot for Interest) and knowing, in some measure, what lies within the Verge of your Province, as well as the Compass of our own Duty; We cannot but address our selves to you, with all the Humility and Earnestness that is proper to the Miserable, That when you come together you would put on Bowells of Compassion; That you would no longer exhaust the Blood

and the Treasure of the Nation; but that you would pity your Countrymen, that are drain'd to the lowest Extremity, and faithfully represent to the Prince the Fears and Groans of the People, for a speedy Peace. It is not Wantonness, or Affectation of Change, or a Seditious and Evil humour, that moves us to desire this; but Poverty and Distress, and a dreadful Necessity, drive us to your Doors; and force us, in the heaviness of our Hearts, and the anguish of our Souls, to pour out our Complaints. For though we should, with more than a masculine Courage, sit silent and content under the pressure of Wracks and Tortures, (let no Man think we affect to aggravate our Grief with pompous or improper Words; for these Calamities are really such to us which have already brought upon us a Famine of Work, and threaten us with, nay make us already feel one of Bread;) I say, should we turn Stoical Mutes, and be silent, many Thousands of our Wives and Children, who now beg or steal to prevent starving, would fill your Ears with more unpleasant and importunate Cries; and set before your Eyes a more Passionate and Rhetorical Address.

We cannot think a Prince can be deaf to our just Crys and Wishes, when presented by such Powerful, we mean Bountiful, Mediators as your selves; or that he will be averse to any thing that is so notoriously for the Good and Recovery of a sinking, oppressed, and dispirited People. And it is altogether absurd and incredible, That he (who unless we were basely and impiously deluded with Cheat and Imposture, and a whole Legend of Protestant Lyes) came over to save us, when he knows what a lamentable Condition we are reduced to, should have a

The weekly Bills shew that some are starv'd. A poor Widdow hang'd her self at *Beckensfield* for fear of Want; and more in other Places press'd with such cruel Necessities have taken several other desperate Methods to put a Period to their Lives, which became hateful to them through the present Exigences they felt, and those future Miseries they fear'd.

mind to continue the War to destroy us. For, in good earnest, if that last any longer, our very Beings are in danger. 'Tis very rarely that the labouring Man has any Excesses to cut off; and the Superfluities of the Nobility and Gentry, in almost all sorts of Expences, which promoted Trade, and fed and supported the Poorer sort, have been already retrenched from the very beginning of the War, that they might the less feel the Weight of constant and heavy Taxes. Inasmuch that these superfluous Crums, which fell from the Tables of the Rich, being now deny'd

the poor Lazars of the Nation, who are besides destitute of all Employment, they struggle for Life, and labour hard, not so much to satisfy their

Appetites,

Appetites, or fill their Bellies, as to keep themselves just Alive, and their Families from perishing with hunger. So that the Harmony of the Two Drum-sticks, *POVERTY and SLAVERY*, which has tickled our Ears, it may be twice every Seventh day from the Pulpit, for above these Five years, is become nauseous now; and we begin to consider what we saw and felt, not what we fear'd in those days; and comparing them with these Times of intolerable Hardship, occasion'd by the War; the Bugbears seem now to be quite disarm'd, and to have lost all their dread and terror with the Mob. And there is nothing but a speedy Peace can recover these wonderful Monsters to their pristine State and Vigour; that can preserve their Force and their Armour, and make them capable of serving the turn for the future at any other Season or Conjunction. If any doubt that the Continuance of the War will be the Ruin of the Nation, especially to the Meanest and the Vulgar, let him consider the outrageous Clamours, and the frequent and bold Tumults of the Sea-men for want of pay, even within the Precincts of the Court it self; let him consider the decay of Merchants, through Losses at Sea, which must affect all marine Employments, and the Dependencies upon them; let him survey and compute the Murders and Risings all over the Kingdom, not so much for the Dearness or Scarcity of Provisions, as Scarcity of Work; For the Murmurs and Up- roars concerning the latter preceded the Riots which were made by reason of the Transportation of Corn, and other Materials for the Belly; And then let him tell me, how these Disorders shall be prevented for the future if the War continues. What shall put the Wheel round, or the Shurtle and Spade in motion? Let him tell me how the Miner shall be employ'd in *Cornwall* and *Derbyshire*? What shall set the Farmer on work in *Wales*; the Lace-man at *Wickham*, and all over the Counties of *Berks*, *Buckingham*, and *Bedford*? What shall unfold the Arms of the poor Clothiers, now idle upon force, in *Gloucestershire*, *Shropshire*, *Suffolk*, *Wiltshire*, *Worcestershire*, and *Yorkshire*; the Knitter in those and other Counties, and the Weaver in *London* and *Middlesex*? What shall protect our Ships, or our Coasts, our Highways, or our Houses, from becoming a Prey; the one to Foreign, the other to Domestick Robbers? What shall secure the Noble, and the Rich, from being made the plunder of the Poor; or falling a Sacrifice to the fury of the grip'd and enrag'd Bowels of the labouring Man, that is now forced through a fatal and constrain'd Idleness to go a hunting for his Prey? Have they not already enter'd upon this unlawful Game, seized the

The great Machine of Rebellion will be lost without it.

Since this War, Landlords have been forced to cry their Estates in the Market in the Country.

the Goods of their wealthier Neighbours; and do they not plead Necessity for their Rule, or their Excuse? Their Career indeed seems to be stop'd at present, and their Hearts allay'd; but all this while they burn within, and will certainly burst out into new Flames, unless the Fire of this unfortunate and bloody War be suddenly extinguish'd. For who can promise to appease the Clamour of their Tongues, or quiet the Discontent of their aking Hearts, without imploying their Hands? And it is not in the Power of any Projector to do this. Alas! how suddenly did the many new Inventions erected into Monopolies since the Revolution disappear, like so many Meteors fallen to the Ground, and dwindle to nothing? Nay, how did the

It ruin'd
the Under-
takers.

Linnen Manufacture (in spite of the Royal Hand that fondly planted, and water'd it) fade and wither in the very blossom? It vanish'd and stole away like an Evenings Dream, or a morning Cloud; only with this difference, That it was less innocent than the Visions of the Night, and not so profitable and refreshing to the weary Inhabitants of the Earth as the early Dew. And indeed to deal plainly, and smother the truth no longer, the Herds of poor are become so numerous of late, that they are too big to be comprehended within the Compass of any studied Invention, or fanciful Project. The Disease is too Epidemical for an ordinary Remedy; and there is nothing but a free and open Trade, to all parts of the World, can heal this flagrant and growing Distemper of the Nation. I appeal to the Masters of the Cloathing Trade, in all Towns, whose Manufacture passes into the *Streights*, and particularly to those of *Leeds*, whether, upon the Miscarriage of the *Turky Fleet*, many poor Work-men were not discharg'd, and forced to wander from City to City, and seek their Bread in desolate and barren Places. For even our Cities are now become the barren and dry Ground, and a meer Wilderness, to the trading and laborious Man, and more comfortless than if they were a Desert without Inhabitant. I appeal to those that went down to *Worcester*, before that fatal News came with a special Commission of Oyer and Terminer to try the Rioters there, whether the Mayor did not inform them, that so many Looms then stood in that City as employ'd Three thousand, or Three thousand six hundred, People: A notable Instance this, how much that Trade is sunk since the War began; whereas before, it was never known to flow in the *English Channel* with a stronger Tide. And yet if a strict Scrutiny were made, 'twill be found that this Account falls short of the Number of Looms that are unemploy'd. For there was much Industry used, to conceal so considerable a Decay of the
Cloathing

Cloathing Trade ; and 'tis believed the Mayor himself was willing to draw a Veil over the Misfortunes of his own Craft and Profession. 'Twas a doleful Cry the Poor then founded in the Ears of those who were sent to try their Fellows in misery and want. *Bread, Bread, Bread, my Lords; For God's sake let us have Bread.* And the like mournful Sound will soon pierce the Doors of both Houses, unless you use all your Power and Endeavours to procure the Blessing of Peace. This, the Interest and Welfare of Three sinking and very much depopulated Kingdoms ; this, the Honour and Safety of the very *English* Name and Race, but too much expos'd in an unprosperous War ; this, the sore Calamities and Prefures that Gall the Necks of the Inhabitants of these decay'd, and almost ruin'd Islands, call for at your hands. Peace is the Voice and the Witness of the People ; and we cannot but pray to God that it may be the Pleasure of the Court, and the Decree of Heaven. This is the Language of all Sorts, the City and the Country, the Rich and the Poor, have no divided Interest in this. Here the different Opinions of Religion and Policy center and agree ; the *Williamites* and the *Jacobites* have no Quarrel upon this Subject, but all conspire together to put up their united Prayers for a speedy, an honourable, and a lasting Peace. 'Tis this alone can make us Happy and Content, and banish the Fears that have so strongly possess'd us of being invaded by Want and Misery. 'Tis this alone can set our Hearts at ease, and remove those sad Omens, and unpleasant Bodings, we fancy to our selves of future Evils, of Hunger, and Famine, and cruel Deaths ; and this alone will free us from the Yoke that sits at present so heavy upon our Shoulders, that we cannot easily imagine the *Papery* and *Slavery* we were made to Fear could have produced any Severities so dreadful and tormenting.

There is another thing too of no less moment which we cannot but propose to your Consideration, because we are so very much concern'd in it. We mean the many Thousands of Souls that yearly Perish in the War. And whether the Sacrifice of so many Lives has already attain'd, or the Sacrifice of so many Thousands more be likely to attain, the Advantage propos'd when the War was first begun, we shall leave to your Grave and Wise Judgments, though we cannot but think a vulgar Capacity may easily determine. No Success has crown'd our Arms that yielded any Tri-
umphs,

The Mayor at that time was a Cloathier.

Perhaps *Ayles, Ponsel, and Turton*, might not hear, or might not mind them, but this is confidently Reported to have been the Cry of the Poor there, when they first went out of the Coach into their Lodging.

ships, but in one Engagement at Sea, which was over-balanced by Two
 Deaths we received from the Enemy before, and has been but too severe-
 ly reveng'd, by burning and taking so many of our *Streights Fleet* this
 last Year, and forcing the rest shamefully to fly home again to our Ports,
 and cutting off for a while the whole Trade of the *Mediterranean*. All our
 other Victories were gain'd over our Country-men, or at least our Fellow
 Subjects, for which our Brows ought rather to be shaded with Cypress than
 adorned with Lawrel. But whether we have beat, or whether we have been
 beaten by our Enemies, we of the poorer and meaner Rank are still the
 Men who have been the main Sufferers in these mighty Slaughters, and
 must be so till this Fountain of Blood be stop'd. How then can you be-
 hold such a Tragical Scene every Year, and not endeavour as well as pray
 for Peace. To continue the War is to set up a Shambles and a Slaughter-
 house for the Commons of *England*, who are drag'd against their Wills,
 and forc'd upon the Swords of their Enemies in foreign Parts, and all
 this to defend the Country of Strangers, not their own. How dare you
 promote such Butcheries any longer, and not relent and tremble? Will
 you do nothing to prevent this Stream of Blood, and not be afraid lest
 the Almighty Arm should smite you with some grievous Plague; or lay
 upon you the Curse and Burthen of the blood-thirsty and the deceitful
 Man? God may harden the obstinate to that degree that they may de-
 spair of mercy, and lay violent hands upon themselves. Remember
 Sir *William Temple's* Son, who long since drown'd, and Mr. *Honywood*, who
 lately hang'd himself. Though we are now accounted no better than
 Sheep for the Slaughter, and are beheld with no better Eye than the poor
 Slaves and *Gibeonites* were in the Land of *Israel*; yet how can you imagine
 that *Saul* and the bloody House will escape, if you persevere still to slay
 us? Just Heaven will some time certainly visit for such unrighteous Slaugh-
 ters of the Natives of your own Nation. How can you then go on to
 blow the Coals, and heap up more Fuel to burn and destroy your Fellow
 Citizens, and never consider that at last it may prove a Funeral Pile to
 your selves? Good God! what a dreadful Fate hangs over these distract-
 ed Kingdoms, that there should not be wise Men enough left that can see,
 or if they can, that dare speak for the Interest of their bleeding Country.
 But if that Blessing be deny'd to a sinful and insatuated People, is there no
 Remain of Humanity in your Breasts? No love left for your *English Bre-*
thren? Is there not one that has pity on his dying Country-men? Not
 one Man of Piety or Mercy amongst you, that will hasten to atone the
 destroying

destroying Angel? That will beseech him to stay it is enough, and to sheath his Sword again; but suffer the angry Weapon to devour us still, and drink our Blood, till we are utterly consum'd: Think with your selves, how many comfortless and desolate Widows the Sword has made, and cast an Eye of Tenderness and Compassion towards them in their Lowliness, and Tears, and Distress. Behold the droves of Fatherless Children, that being destitute of Food and Rayment, and surrounded with Penury, and extreme Necessity, croud about your Doors, and cry aloud for Relief, and stand like so many Orators, to perswade and convince you that 'tis the Interest of *England* to make an end of the War. Such real and doleful Complaints, from such lamentable Objects of Pity, we hope will have the good Fortune to strike upon the sensible and tender Part, and set you effectually on Work to procure that Blessing which of all others we most desire, in this World, A speedy and a lasting Peace.

'Tis our Prayers, and all our Design in this Paper, that it may have that prevalence and effect upon you. But if this will not move you, which is written with the Tears of the Living, and convey'd to you with the mournful Ait and Sighs of the miserable Reliques of a ruin'd Nation, who yet survive the tragical Fate, and bewail the sad Catastrophe of their dear Brethren and Friends, who have fallen in the preceding Campaigns; The next shall be dated from the Graves of the Dead at *Steinkirk*, and sent from the Shades of those who lie unbury'd at *Norwind* and *London*. It shall speak the Language of Pain and Torment. It shall be fill'd with the lamentable Cry of the Wounded, and the ghastly Figures of those who have Rotted and Starv'd in the Ditches of *Holland*, or the Barns and Hospitals of *Flanders*. It shall pierce your very Hearts and Bowels with the strong Shrieks and Groans of those who are ready to Gaspe and Expire, and accuse Death of no other Cruelty but coming too slow to make an end of a weary Life. The Ink shall be of a Crimson or a Scarlet hue. The Pen shall be dipt in the Sanguine Waters of *Brabant*, that have been stain'd by the untimely Deaths of the bravest of our *English* Men. It shall flow with the Purple Gore of the River *Gheet*; and the Characters shall be all over drawn with the Blood of your Slain, unpitied as well as unreveng'd Country-men.

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POSTSCRIPT.

This was designed and ready for the Press in October last, but the Difficulties of Printing delaying it so long, some Particulars have been added since.

F I N I S.



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